

Snapped today, gone tomorrow

Exciting gadgets perfect the selfie and help us manage our photo cache



There is a certain dread tech writers have around New Year's Eve. It is not the eventuality of our resolutions being broken (I am looking at you, outdoor running gear). The dread is from the cold realization that the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas starts in just a few, short days.

We've barely come off the high of gadget-giving season. Now we are faced with the prospect of a new onslaught of "the next big things."

So, this column will go over some of the gadgets and apps that I'm excited for. These include some that are new on the horizon and a few you might have missed.

QUEST FOR THE PERFECT SELFIE

I am always blown away by the smoothness of drone videography. Those gorgeous pans over beautiful vistas, those slow flybys of beautiful buildings – right before you crash your \$1,500 drone into a telephone pole.

The visual stability is from the use of a gimbal system. Most gimbal systems have three axis – from professional helicopter rigs to personal drones.

Now, if I could only take a selfie with that same stability. Friends, that day is here. The DJI Osmo Mobile is a three-axis gimbal system on which you mount your iPhone or Android smartphone.

Most DSLR cameras have some form



Alex Kinsella

of digital stabilizer. A gimbal system is a physical stabilizer. This gives you Hollywood-like control of your camera, allowing for smooth pans and almost perfect stability.

I took my iPhone and the DJI Osmo out for Oktoberfest last fall. You wouldn't know the video was shot on a phone or that I may have taken one or two shots before filming.

DJI also includes the Osmo application for your smartphone. Using the Osmo app's Active Track feature, you can tag yourself, and the Osmo will follow as you move around. Perfect for starting your own cooking show or how-to blog.

The DJI Osmo Mobile is available at your local photography store or online for about \$400.

SORTING SMARTPHONE PHOTOS

One of the downsides to smartphone photography is the seemingly endless number of photos on your smartphone. I have had my iPhone 6s since September 2015. At this moment, there are 2,062 photos on it.

Sorting them is a tedious process. The built-in photo applications on Android and

iPhone are great for deleting one or two photos. But deleting en masse, not so much.

The team at the Canon Innovation Lab at Communitech saw this problem time and time again in their own lives and took on the challenge. (Full disclosure: My day job is at Communitech.)

The result is Jumpshot, an application for iPhone smartphones.

Inspiration came from other mobile applications that let you quickly like or dismiss something with the flick of a finger. With Jumpshot, you are presented with one photograph. If it's a memory worth saving, simply swipe the photograph to the right and it is saved.

If you are like me, there are probably 15 snaps of your children in which not one of them is looking at the camera. With a swipe to the left, Jumpshot sends those photos to the trash.

You don't have to worry about accidentally deleting a cherished memory. You have one chance to review your "to be deleted" photographs before finally sending them to their digital resting place.

Jumpshot is available for free on the Apple App Store (<http://apple.co/2fhG8bs>)

SECURITY WITHOUT THAT PESKY CAMERA

For someone who works in tech, I do not have many smart home gadgets. We

had a new furnace installed last year and the company included a smart thermostat. Once I saw it, I quickly had them replace it with a standard unconnected thermostat. Call me old-fashioned, but I like my phones smart and my house offline.

I would like the feeling of safeguard a camera-based security system can provide, but it is the camera part that stops me. Even with a secure setup, I am still uncomfortable with the idea of a camera or cameras sitting around my home.

Local startup Cognitive Systems Corp. has come up with a solution that addresses that concern and much more. At this year's Consumer Electronics Show, the Cognitive Systems team is launching Aura, which monitors your whole home with a simple two-piece solution.

Cognitive Systems was founded by Hugh Hind, Oleksiy Kravets and Taj Manku. Their complementary expertise in all facets of RF (radio frequencies) gave them an idea – to build a sensor that expands the use of

wireless signals to help us understand the environment around us.

Wireless signals surround us at home, at work and everywhere in between. Aura uses those signals to watch for ripples caused by movement, like a door opening or a person walking, and alerts users of unexpected motion on their smartphone. With Aura, you not only can monitor motion, but also see which household members are home and a timeline of activity.

Aura allows you to monitor activity from anywhere using your iPhone or Android smartphone. For more information, follow the links from www.cognitivesystems.com.

CODING FOR KIDS

Getting started is always the hardest step. If you are a parent, you have heard the call to action that all children should learn to code. But finding the right place to start can be daunting.

It's even a challenge for me as a parent. I am a developer, but I only remember

learning how to code – not how I was taught. Thankfully there are a number of resources available.

The best place to start is with the online tool Scratch (<https://scratch.mit.edu>). Developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Scratch is a visual drag-and-drop system that children can use to create games or interactive videos. The best part is that, as a parent, you can easily figure out the tool, and you and your child can discover coding together.

If you are interested in learning more, Hive Waterloo Region (www.facebook.com/HiveWR) and Ladies Learning Code (<http://ladieslearningcode.com/program/kids-learning-code>) have great resources available.

Who knows? You could be witnessing the start of the next great app or gadget at your breakfast table.

Alex Kinsella has been part of Waterloo Region's tech community since 2004 and is always looking for the next great gadget (or tacos, if it's Tuesday). Find him on Twitter at @alexkinsella

Integrity • Commitment • Results

Davidson Professional Wealth Management



- Financial Planning
- Investment Management
- Wealth Planning

Taylor Iutzi
Associate

Laura Schmitt
Associate

Brad Davidson, CFP, CIM
Vice President & Portfolio Manager

Clare Brennan, PFP, B.Comm,
Associate Advisor

Chris Emms, FMA, CFP, CIM
Associate Advisor & Financial Planner

YourMoney, Well Managed

RBC Dominion Securities, Waterloo

www.dpwm.ca

519-747-1349

Professional Wealth Management Since 1901



RBC Wealth Management
Dominion Securities

RBC Dominion Securities Inc* and Royal Bank of Canada are separate corporate entities which are affiliated. *Member CIPF. *Registered Trademark of Royal Bank of Canada. Used under licence. RBC Dominion Securities is a registered trademark of Royal Bank of Canada. Used under licence. ©Copyright 2016. All rights reserved.